



## ***ROCKDALE COUNTY PRESS RELEASE***

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### **ARC Honors Rockdale County for its Commitment to Sustainability**

CONYERS, Ga. – Rockdale County was one of five local governments to be recognized this week by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for leadership in implementing policies and practices that contribute to efficient and sustainable use of resources in metro Atlanta.

“Over the past 24 months, our Directors and leadership team were tasked with Rockdale becoming a Green Community,” Chairman and CEO Richard Oden said. “They worked very hard to accomplish this significant achievement to make this community sustainable for our future.”

Rockdale was honored at ARC’s board meeting Jan. 27 for becoming a Bronze Certified Green Community. This is the first time the county has achieved certification in ARC’s Green Communities program. ARC also recognized the cities of Atlanta, Norcross, Peachtree Corners and Woodstock for certifying or upgrading their certification in ARC’s six-year-old Green Communities program.

“These local governments are to be commended for making their communities more sustainable places,” said Kerry Armstrong, ARC board chairman. “Their efforts to conserve energy, reduce waste and protect natural resources set an example for the entire region.”

Steps Rockdale took to become certified include:

- Capturing rainwater to irrigate soccer fields at Earl O’Neal Park, using a rainwater retention pond. This saves 800,000 gallons of potable water a year.
- Installing LED lighting at Johnson Park Recreation Center, resulting in an 83 percent reduction in energy use for lighting. This change will result in more than \$99,000 in savings over the next five years.
- Making fresh fruits and vegetables available at the Rockdale County-supported farmer’s market. Residents may also grow their own vegetables year-round at the Parker Community Garden and the Senior Center Garden.
- Installing bike racks at more than half of its community facilities, with plans to place bike racks at the remaining facilities in the next two years. Each bike rack features a sign with a QR code that be scanned via smart phones to pull up locations of other Rockdale County bike racks.

- Building Lorraine Park Trailhead on a brownfield site that had been contaminated by an auto salvage yard. The county purchased the riverfront property and remediated the soil and groundwater. A sight that once held more than 800 tons of concrete, 246 tons of trash and 27 tons of tires is now a beautiful part of the Arabia River Trail system.

ARC developed the Green Communities Program in 2009 to recognize local governments that invest in programs and policies that lead to a more sustainable region. The nationally recognized program showcases the ways in which local governments are helping transform the region by reducing their environmental footprint.

Since 2009, 20 jurisdictions in the 10-county region have been certified. Cities and counties earn Green Communities certification by implementing practices and policies in 10 categories, ranging from energy efficiency and green building to transportation and water efficiency. ARC's Green Communities program was the first program in the country seeking to transform a region by promoting sustainability through a "green" certification program for local governments.

Complete information about ARC's Green Communities Certification Program, including the measures each community has implemented, is available on the agency's website [www.atlantaregional.com/greencommunities](http://www.atlantaregional.com/greencommunities).



*Members of the Rockdale County delegation celebrate receiving the Atlanta Regional Commission's Bronze Green Community certification. It is the first for Rockdale County.*

*The Atlanta Regional Commission is the official planning agency for the 10-county Atlanta Region, including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties as well as the City of Atlanta and 70 other cities. The Atlanta Regional Commission serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, attention and planning resources on key regional issues.*

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***ROCKDALE COUNTY IS A PERFECTLY-POSITIONED COMMUNITY WITH A ROCK-SOLID APPROACH DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE, QUALITY OF LIFE AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.***